

## 報告

# The Folk Craft(*Mingei*)Movement and Tōhoku Rural Community during the Syōwa Depression Period: A Sketch of an Intellectual Intersection

民藝運動と昭和恐慌期の東北農村社会——ある知的交差の素描

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 柳宗悦, 有賀喜左衛門, シャルロット・ペリアン

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background of questions

The Isigami (石神) hamlet in Hatimantai city, Iwate prefecture, is the well-known research locale of sociologist Aruga Kizaemon<sup>1)</sup> (有賀喜左衛門; 1897-1979), who is one of the founders of Japanese rural sociology. His *Dōzokudan* (同族団; cognate groups) theory originated from research in the Isigami hamlet, mainly focusing on the most established household there, the Ōya Saitō household (大屋齋藤家), which he began research on, in 1935. Thanks to this theory, he succeeded in grasping the fundamental structure of pre-WWII Japanese society.

Peasants in the Tōhoku district were impoverished because of the Syōwa Depression, which began in 1930. At that time, the folk crafts activists such as Yanagi Sōetu (柳宗悦; 1889-1961) were cooperating with rural economic reconstruction efforts conducted by the national institute for economic research in snowy rural regions (積雪地方農村経済調査所)<sup>2)</sup> in Sinzō town, Yamagata prefecture, focusing on the rural folk crafts in the Tōhoku district. Coincidentally, Yanagi also visited the Isigami hamlet at nearly the same time when Aruga was conducting research. In our search for documents of the Ōya Saitō household, we found a souvenir card from Saitō's documents written by Yanagi and other related parties. From this card, it appeared that Yanagi and other folk crafts activists had visited the Isigami hamlet in 1938 (Fig.1).

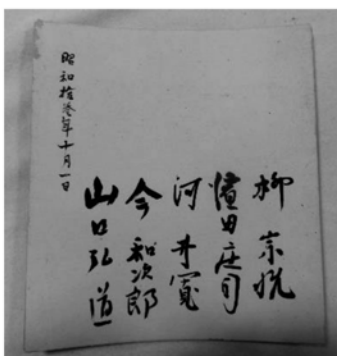


Fig. 1. A souvenir card by Yanagi et al., Oct. 1, 1938.

More interesting is the fact that the French architect and interior designer Charlotte Perriand (1903-99), who worked for the famous Le Corbusier's studio, was invited to Japan as an official industrial design advisor and traveled to the Tōhoku district with folk crafts activists. It is interesting that

so many people have been involved in Isigami research.

Formerly, Isigami research was discussed mostly in the context of 1) Aruga and the Japanese Rural Sociology, 2) Sibusawa Keizō (1896-1963), who was a famous business leader and a patron of this research, and the Attic Museum which was a private ethnology research institute founded by Sibusawa. As we began to focus on the Isigami hamlet, we were able to encounter others also involved in Isigami research, such as sociologists, folk craft activists, industrial designers, economists, agricultural government officers, and so on. Curiously there has not been a lot of research about relationships among these people. However, upon our re-examination in the light of rural economic rehabilitation movement and the folk crafts movements, we may be able to gain a new insight in this aspect.

### 1.2 Research questions

In this study, firstly, we attempt to get an overview of some facts of these peoples' activities and their relationships after the Syōwa Depression period. Secondly, we try to discover more details of these people and the problems of their academic disciplines and movements. This would allow us to understand the complicated circumstances of their standpoints and the implications of their activities.

### 1.3 Social contexts from the Syōwa Depression to the wartime regime

Some major social events from the Syōwa Depression to the wartime regime are as follows.

- 1929 The Great Depression. The Syōwa Depression.
- 1931 Manchurian Incident.
- 1932 5.15 Incident. The rural economic rehabilitation movement (農山漁村経済更生運動) is started.
- 1937 Sino-Japanese war.
- 1941 Pacific war.

In a rough sketch, we understood that the Great Depression and the Syōwa Depression caused rural families heavy damages, and with that, the fascism movement began to accelerate. Then the Japanese

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government started the rural economic rehabilitation movement to reorganize rural community as suitable for fascism.

Under these circumstances, the *Nago* (名子; serf, i.e. someone who lived and worked on land that they did not own and had to work for the owner) system in Iwate was noticed and became one of the focuses to think about poverty and feudalism in Japanese society. The reason why the Isigami hamlet was noticed was the fact that the *Nago* system was still practiced at that time.

#### 1.4 Overview of the Isigami hamlet

We would like to give an overview of the research field of the Isigami hamlet. The Isigami hamlet is located in Ninohe county, Iwate prefecture, in the north of Japan. It is a mountainous hamlet. There were 37 households in 1936.

The reason why the Isigami hamlet was selected as a research field was that Sibusawa Keizō, who was a patron of this research and the leader of the Attic Museum, was traveling in the Tōhoku district and stopped by Isigami in 1934. He found a huge curiosity for large families of the Ōya Saitō household. Therefore, he planned the multi-disciplinary research.

In the Isigami hamlet, the Ōya Saitō household descends from the warrior class after the beginning of the early modern period, when soldiers stopped fighting and had to return to the land to make a living. Ōya (which means a main household) played a key role and developed the hamlet forming the *Dōzokudan* (cognate groups) with subordinate families such as *Bunke* (分家; branch family) and *Nago*. In 1935 the Ōya Saitō household contained 21 members (12 relatives, 9 servants (non-relatives)), and there were 12 *Nago* families in Ōya Saitō's *Dōzokudan*. The Ōya Saitō household possessed 17 ha of field and 120 ha of mountain forest. This household managed a lacquerware business and needed a certain number of labor forces (Aruga 1939).

Large families and the *Dōzokudan* like Ōya Saitō could be found throughout Japan, and quite frequently in the northeast, until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the *Dōzokudan* began to disappear in the early Syōwa era, especially around 1930. After 1930 the number of the Ōya Saitō household members began to decrease.

## 2. Some academic disciplines and people involved in Isigami research

### 2.1 Relationship between Isigami research and the Japanese rural sociology

#### *Isigami research*

As mentioned above, the Isigami hamlet has an important meaning for considering the foundation of Japanese rural sociology. According to the orthodox theory, the Japanese rural sociology has founded its base on two important books written by Aruga (Aruga 1943) and Suzuki Eitarō (Suzuki 1940). Their theory was called *Ie Mura* theory, which treats *Ie* (家; household) and *Mura* (村; hamlet) as core factors

to understand the Japanese village structure, and which has an important place until now. One of the important fields where Aruga depends on for his theory making is the Isigami hamlet.

The Attic Museum whose research activities were led by Sibusawa planned the multi-disciplinary research from 1935 for the Isigami hamlet with people such as Aruga (sociology), Tutiya Takao (economic history), Kon Waziro (architecture), and Hayakawa Kōtarō (folklore). Unfortunately, the research was not conducted smoothly, and Aruga became the only person who wrote a thick and distinguished monograph (Aruga 1939)<sup>3)</sup>.

The reason why Isigami research attracted attention was that the area retained the large family and the *Nago* system, which was scarce in those days. In particular, this *Nago* system was noticed as being the foundation of the feudal system of Japanese society at that time, especially by Marxist economists, because the labor provided by the *Nago* families is regarded as rent for the land that the *Nago* families were living on.

#### *Aruga Kizaemon*

We would like to give a brief introduction of Aruga (Fig.2). He was born in a land owner's home in Nagano prefecture. He committed himself to the *Sirakaba* (白樺, white birch) movement in the Sinsyū area, which is an idealistic, humanistic and literary movement. At the Second High School in Sendai, he became classmates with Sibusawa and Tutiya. Then he studied art history at Tōkyō Imperial University. He majored in Korean folk art, so he visited Korea with Yanagi, his advisor, who had a detailed knowledge for Korean folk art. But throughout the trip to Korea with Yanagi, Aruga realized that without grasping a deep understanding of the craft workers' daily lives, it was impossible to truly understand the aesthetic beauty of their art (Aruga and Nakano 1968=2012: 12-3).

So, he kept a distance from the folk crafts movement, and started to focus on Yanagita Kunio's Japanese folklore. However, he gradually became suspicious of Yanagita's *Zyūsyūto Rissyō Hō* (重出立証法; identical comparative method, which compares folk phenomena in various parts of Japan but the context of the community where the events are located is omitted) (Aruga 1969: 75). Therefore he began to adopt the monographic method (like Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown), and he used Marcel Mauss's concept of seeing particular phenomena as representations of the whole society (*prestations totales*). Like this,



Fig. 2. Portrait of Aruga  
(Courtesy of Japan  
Women's University)

Aruga finally transformed his position to sociology. It was during these times that he began investigating the Isigami hamlet.

#### *Controversies concerning Japanese capitalism*

In Japanese academism, there were harsh controversies concerning Japanese capitalism from 1933 to 1937. These controversies were called *Nihon Sihonsyugi Ronsō* (日本資本主義論争). In these controversies, Japanese Marxists which were divided into two major schools called *Kōzaha* (講座派) and *Rōnōha* (労農派) tried to grasp the essence of Japanese capitalism characteristics, and the feudal nature of Japanese rural villages was discussed. Marxist economists thought that the *Nago* system like Isigami is an important factor that shaped the feudal characteristics in Japanese society. Tutiya was also heavily involved in these controversies.

However, Aruga objected to the ordinary understanding like this. He insisted that we should understand the *Nago* system from Living Organization as the *Dōzokudan* and had to realize that there was mutuality of the benefit relationship in total (*prestations totales*), which made the *Dōzokudan* one of the base structures of Japanese society. This idea by Aruga led to a new understanding of the landowner and peasant relationship at that time, and was called as 'the third position', a view different from both major Marxist schools, *Kōzaha* and *Rōnōha*.

In this way, Aruga made the cornerstone of the Japanese rural sociology based on the *Dōzokudan*, with Isigami research as one of the important grounds, against the background of the controversy concerning Japanese capitalism.

## 2.2 The folk crafts movements and Isigami

### *Isigami and Zyōbōzi lacquerware*

As mentioned above, Isigami research was discussed mostly in the context of controversy concerning capitalism or rural sociology. But we found that there was a relationship between Yanagi and Isigami. In other words, there is a possibility that the folk crafts movement also has a connection with Isigami. Coincidentally, Yanagi is one of the people who influenced Aruga in his youth.

In the Asazawa area, where the Isigami hamlet belongs, there were many lacquerware businesses. The Ōya Saitō household also managed a big lacquerware business called *Zyōbōzi Wan* (浄法寺碗; *Zyōbōzi* lacquerware) and needed a considerable labor force. *Zyōbōzi* lacquerware was produced as peasants' side jobs during winter, and a lot of inexpensive items were created for Hokkaidō from the Meizi Period. Around 1930 when Aruga and Yanagi visited, this *Zyōbōzi* lacquerware had been recognized as being of poor quality and made using cheap production.

### *The folk craft (Mingei)*

What is the folk craft (product, movement)? The word *Mingei* (民藝) is a made-up word by Yanagi, and it is said to be an abbreviation of

*Minsyū teki Kōgei* (民衆の工藝). Yanagi was influenced by the arts and crafts movement by William Morris and developed his original movement in Japan.

Yanagi is a pioneer of the folk crafts activists and a religious thinker. He started his activity from the *Sirakaba* movement and gradually shifted to the folk crafts movement. Comrades are people such as Kawai Kanzirō (potter; 1890-1966), Hamada Syōzi (potter, 1894-1978), and Bernard Leach (potter, 1887-1979) among others.

Yanagi pointed out *Mingei's* characteristic as follows; 1) utility, 2) repeatedness, 3) inexpensiveness, 4) communality, 5) regularity, 6) nature of pattern, 7) impersonality, 8) indirectness, and 9)inconvenience (Yanagi 1942=1972). Although a detailed explanation is omitted, Yanagi insisted that the folk craft is not a workpiece made for appreciation, but a craft product that has a beauty of necessity (用) which provides some practicality. Also, the personality of the craft worker is denied.

There is one episode that can tell us the extent to which folk crafts activists pay attention to peasant life. Yanagi and other comrades went to a peasant house in Yamagata prefecture for the folk crafts research. At that time, Kawai saw a harvested bunch of rice in a ceiling of a farmhouse, which looked like a wisteria, and said unexpectedly, "What richness it is!" Yamaguti Hiromiti, who was a president of the *Settyō*, reflectively recalled that he had only been looking at irrationality and unsanitary aspects of the rural life in snow country, sympathizing with the misfortune of peasants, and somehow thought that he must save these peasants from this misfortune. But for that reason, he could not see the pleasures which existed in the self-sufficient lives of peasants, who made many crafts for their own lives with their own hands (Yamaguti 1953: 75-6).

This episode shows that the attention of the folk crafts activists was not focused on the appearance of an impoverished rural life but rather on the inner beauty of folk goods and folk crafts.

We would like to point out another characteristic of the folk crafts activists. Yanagi's activities also extended to Korea and Okinawa. As an intellectual at that time, he stressed the protection and support of the own culture of Korea and Okinawa exceptionally, and he ran into conflicts with the government policy.

In order to investigate the national folk crafts, Yanagi traveled nationwide with other comrades. That is why they came to Isigami. A research at that time was introduced, for example, in *Handwork of Japan* (Yanagi 1948=1972). Regarding Iwate, Yanagi introduced Masuzawa lacquerware (増沢塗) and homespun clothes in Waga county in addition to *Zyōbōzi* lacquerware. They were highly evaluated. However, it was not just for the folk crafts research that they came to Tōhoku. In the background there was some relationship to the *Settyō* mentioned above.

## 2.3 The Settyō and the folk crafts movement

### *The Settyō*

Concerning Yanagi's Tōhoku research, it is necessary to consider the *Settyō* and its first president Yamaguti Hiromiti (山口弘道; 1895-1978). In this regard, there is detailed research by Ōtomo Gisuke (Ōtomo 1999; 2001; 2013), Oikawa Kiyohide (Oikawa 2003) and Kusumoto Masahiro (Kusumoto 2003).

As mentioned earlier, the *Settyō* was set up in Sinzyō, Yamagata prefecture in 1933. It was a research agency of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Its primary objective was to revitalize the rural village suffering from the Syōwa agricultural depression, especially the Tōhoku rural areas hit by heavy snowfall. Here, in order to overcome the damage caused by the snow, an experimental farm house was built by Kon, and development of preserved foods during the winter was also conducted (Ōtomo 1999: 40-2). Under these circumstances, in 1937, the *Settyō* attempted to improve the side jobs of peasants to secure cash income in winter. President Yamaguti thought that the work of straw can be linked to cash income with an aid of the folk crafts movement. Incidentally, in junior high school Yamaguti was a classmate with Hamada, who would become a famous folk craft potter (Ōtomo 2013: 4).

### *Cooperation between the Settyō and Mingei*

Yamaguti visited Yanagi in March 1937 and Yanagi agreed to cooperate with Yamaguti to improve the side jobs of peasants through folk craft activities. During this period, research on folk crafts by Yanagi and his fellows in Okinawa got into full swing, and it was a period when they were about to exert their emphasis also on the Tōhoku district. Therefore, he also took Yamaguti's request with great expectations (Ōtomo 2013: 3). The intentions of both may have been met. Thus, from 1937 till 1942, the *Settyō* and Yanagi and other folk artisans, conducted not only research and collection of the folk crafts, but also held exhibitions, lectures, and training sessions for new crafts production, at the Tōhoku district, Tōkyō and other metropolitan areas (Fig.3). In the first exhibition of folk crafts in Mogami area in 1938,



Fig. 3. Workshops for the folk crafts making in Sinzyō: around 1939  
(Courtesy of Yuki no Sato Zyōhōkan<sup>4)</sup>)

there were about 1000 visitors in two days. In the exhibition in Syōnai area in 1939, there were close to 8,000 visitors in two days. Many of the excellent items in these exhibits were purchased by the Japan Folk Crafts Museum and the *Settyō*. Also, part of the exhibits in Syōnai area were purchased by Minister of Education (Ōtomo 2013: 7).

Yanagi and his fellows did the following activities.

1937.9 1st research in Mogami area. Meeting with related people.

// 10 2nd research in Mogami area.

// 11 3rd research in Mogami area.

1938.5 The Mogami county folk craft exhibition (at the *Settyō*).

1939.2 Syōnai area folk craft exhibition (at the Syōnai agricultural school).

// 5-6 The Tōhoku district folk craft exhibition (at the Japan folk crafts museum).

1940.2 Research in the Tōhoku district (in Aizuwakamatsu, Yamagata, Akita, Aomori, Morioka).

1941.6 Folk craft exhibition (at Mitukosi department store, Nihonbasi, Tōkyō).

In addition, Yamaguti also organized not only exhibitions but also public folk craft lectures in each prefecture in the Tōhoku district. These lectures were held in various places from February to March 1940 (but there are some doubts as to whether some were actually held). For example, the Iwate prefectural folk craft exhibition was held from February 25th to 28th, 1940, and a lecture was held on 27th (Ōtomo 2013: 11). Moreover, aiming at renewing folk crafts, Yamaguti gathered people such as the chief of side jobs, rural rehabilitation instructors, and folk crafts makers in every Tōhoku prefecture, and held a new folk craft production training course at the *Settyō* for one week from April to May 1941. The lecturers were Yanagi, Kawai, Hamada and Serizawa Keisuke (dye craftsman). Perriand was also scheduled to be a lecturer, but she apparently did not participate (Ōtomo 2013: 13).

### *Yamaguti Hiromiti*

What kind of person is Yamaguti who planned such things? He was an elite officer who graduated from the Tōkyō Imperial University, from both the faculty of law and the faculty of agriculture (agricultural economics major) and later on entered the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. He could be said to have had an understanding of cultural and artistic activities. He had an interest in the folk crafts movement even before becoming the president of the *Settyō*.



Fig. 4. Yamaguti and Yanagi at the *Settyō*: around 1939 (Courtesy of Yuki no Sato Zyōhōkan<sup>4)</sup>)

He thought not only to refine and sell handicrafts made by peasants as side jobs, not only just to make traditional folk crafts, but also to go further and put emphasis on creating daily goods according to the new era on its spiritual foundation (Yamaguti 1958: 77). Also, Yamaguti seems to have given a strong positive impression to Perriand (Perriand 1998a: 1). It can be said that both having such good character and plenty of room for discretion as the first president of the *Settyō* greatly influenced the direction of the laboratory and the research contents of the staff. The existence of such a distinctive officer enabled good collaboration with Yanagi's folk crafts movement (Fig. 4).

#### *Consequences of cooperation*

As an influencer of such collaborative activities, Ōtomo pointed out that local people realized beauty is hidden among the local folk crafts. This brought great confidence and pride to the local people, and sales of the folk crafts gave an economic income to the local people suffering from recession (Ōtomo 2013: 8).

However, such cooperation between the folk crafts movements and the government would end with the outbreak of the Pacific War because it became difficult to secure materials through goods control. Yamaguti also moved to the headquarters of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in 1943. After the war, he resigned from the Ministry, and founded a company specializing in cultural films. But it is not clear whether he had interacted with folk crafts activists after that.

## 2.4 Relationship with Perriand

### *Perriand and the folk crafts movement*

In describing the *Settyō* and the folk crafts movement, we have to mention another key person, Charlotte Perriand. She was a French architect and interior designer, who had worked for the famous Le Corbusier's studio. She had been invited to Japan as an official industrial design advisor from 1940 to 1941 by the Trade Bureau, Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Before her, other well-known foreigners such as architect Bruno Taut had also visited Japan on invitation. The person who invited Perriand to Japan was the architect Sakakura Zyuzō who also had worked under the same Corbusier studio. Furthermore, Yanagi Sōri, a son of Yanagi Sōetsu, was also involved in this invitation, so as soon as she came to Japan, she had deep exchanges with members of the folk crafts movements.

In addition, another purpose of her visit to Japan was to collect Japanese photographic materials for the establishment of the Anthropology Museum in Paris, which were requested by Georges-Henri Rivière ("Charlott Perriand et le Japon" Study Group ed. 2011: 88, 255). Regarding this point, French ethnologist and archaeologist André Leroi-Gourhan has also visited Japan as one of Perriand's predecessors (Leroi-Gourhan et Yamanaka 2000)<sup>5)</sup>.

Like Yanagi, Perriand has also traveled to instruct the folk crafts in various places in Japan. In November 1940, Yamaguti invited her to

visit the Tōhoku district. She visited the *Settyō* on November 6th with Yanagi Sōri (Fig.5). There she instructed the creation of a chair using bamboo, and it came to be highly praised by the folk crafts activists<sup>6)</sup>.

Her production philosophy was to exclude sophisticated things and to respect the autonomy of the creator. Therefore, she usually gave only approximate dimensions and functional requirements to craftsmen instead of detailed guidance. Perriand has said in her own words, that crafts lining up in the display hall were generally not good. She said that there were few representative good items in local areas, but there were good items in the peasants' products. What she felt in Sinzō, in particular, was to let people simply give the requirements of the product they wanted and leave the creation to the makers, rather than showing various manufacturing conditions or providing the mold. Such a method would make better things, according to Perriand. She also added that the goodness of folk craft appeared in the way it was made while feeling like the maker was using it at his own home. It will fail if the craft is made to display in an exhibition, to aim at a prize, or to sell (Perriand et al. 1941: 17).

In this way, there is something in common with the philosophy of Yanagi. Perriand also found a congenial spirit in Yanagi and others. Especially, she became acquainted with Kawai Kanzirō and stayed nearby for nearly a month in Kyōto. Yanagi also evaluated Perriand considerably well (Yanagi and Hamada 1941).

Perriand walked around Japan and instructed people for about a year, and then held an exhibition *Selection, Tradition and Creation* at Takasimaya, Tōkyo in April 1941 (Perriand 1941). Because the Pacific War broke out, she

was dismissed from her post, and had to go to French Indochina. After the war, she returned to France, resumed her activities, and visited Japan several times after that.



Fig. 5. Perriand at the *Settyō*: in 1940  
(Courtesy of Yuki no Sato Zyōhōkan<sup>4)</sup>)

### *Influence by Perriand*

What was the result of Perriand's visit to Japan? On the economic side, maybe we have to scrutinize much more on whether her instruction increased the peasants' incomes. Rather than that we would like to pay attention to the fact that intellectual exchanges between intellectuals and artisans, even though it was under the wartime regime, were carried out over the Tōhoku district. That means the folk crafts movement at that time had an international universality. Moreover, the fact that the people involved were not only architects and designers, but also ethnologists, will be an important factor and will throw in a new



perspective when considering Japanese related research history<sup>7)</sup>.

#### *Perriand and Iwate*

Regarding the relationship between Perriand and Iwate, we still could not find clear material. Indeed, in the pictures collected by Perriand, and the pictures displayed at the exhibition in 1941, there are pictures of Zyōbōzi lacquerware ("Charlott Perriand et le Japon" Study Group ed. 2011: 123, Barsac éd. 2015: 45). In addition, there is a description that she visited Morioka and found a folk craft in November 1940 (Perriand 1998b: 165). But there was no related article in the newspaper in Iwate at that time. We also speculated that she had visited *Kōgensya* (famous folk craft shop) or the Iwate Prefectural Industrial Experimental Center (currently the Iwate Prefectural Industrial Technology Center), but we could not find any visitation record. We believe that the lacquerware in Iwate gave a strong impression because there were several items of Zyōbōzi lacquerware at the exhibition in 1941 (*Selection, Tradition and Creation*). However, these lacquerwares may have been borrowed from Yanagi who gathered Zyōbōzi lacquerware in advance, therefore it is hard to say clearly about the influence of Perriand's visit, if any, to Iwate<sup>8)</sup>.

## 2.5 Criticism about political awareness

As described above, we have reviewed the various studies and people involved in the Isigami research. As seen in the cooperation between the *Settyō* and *Mingei*, the relationship between Yanagi and political power has become an issue. This is largely manifested in the evaluation of the attitude of Yanagi towards Korea and Okinawa.

At that time, Yanagi was a rare Japanese intellectual who praised the folk art of Korea and Okinawa and severely protested to the Japanese government's cultural policy towards Korea and Okinawa. About these points, studies by Takenaka (1999) is suggestive. Takenaka pointed out the lack of political awareness in folk crafts movement by quoting an argument from the viewpoint of Orientalism (Edward Said), using Karatani Kōzin and Oguma Eizi.

For example, the criticism by Oguma was like this. At that time people in Okinawa hoped to 'civilize' themselves to eliminate poverty and discrimination. However, here the civilization is identified as 'Japanization'. Then Yanagi wanted to protect the language and culture of Okinawa because he believed that pure Japan remained in Okinawa. However, Oguma criticized that what he did carried the part of nationalism (Takenaka 1999: 23).

Karatani criticized as follows. Yanagi celebrated the Korean people because the Koreans had beauty. That kind of thought stands on the criteria that ethnic groups that produce great beauty deserve independence (Takenaka 1999: 27). That means, if they do not produce great beauty, they have to accept subordination. Takenaka pointed out that Yanagi is not accepting Korean people as merely another different type of people (Takenaka 1999: 27).

The criticism concerning lack of awareness of politics at the level pointed out by Karatani and Oguma, which is in the context of Orientalism, seems reasonable also to Yanagi's relationship with the *Settyō* and the rural economic rehabilitation movement<sup>9)</sup>.

Considering these points, and Aruga's criticism that if the folk craft movement does not try to have a good understanding of the craftworkers' lives, it is impossible to understand the aesthetic beauty of their craft, we can conclude with two points.

Firstly, it seems that there is a great difference in the approaches of Aruga and Yanagi to grasping the beauty of folk craft. Aruga believed that to understand the beauty of folk craft, it was necessary to understand the lives of the peasants. 'Life' that Aruga thought was difficult to grasp, was not only an external or tangible concept such as poverty. For understanding daily lives, it is essential to grasp 'internal relations' (Aruga 1939: 15) which Aruga frequently referred to, such as the relationship among peasants and their structural meanings. It may be impossible to grasp such lives in the folk craft movement. However, for Yanagi and other folk crafts artisans, because it would be impossible to grasp the lives of the peasants fully, it seems that to them, such an idea of beauty was not correct. For Yanagi and other folk craft artisans, it appeared that finding beauty in the craft produced was more important, and they may have believed that the sociological analysis of the peasant life that Aruga did was not able to do that.

Secondly, the various people involved have different standpoints because of their circumstances at that time. Yanagi and Aruga, who had once connected through Korean art, coincidentally nearly intersected at the Isigami hamlet in Iwate again. However, at this time, Yanagi was involved in the investigation of the folk crafts with assistance from the government. It can be said to be a kind of political and practical involvement. On the other hand, Aruga was apart from political or governmental affairs, but sank in the pure academic direction, trying to build an academic discipline to understand Japanese society and grasp people's lives. The folk crafts movement, which was criticized by Aruga as it did not fully try to understand people's lives, was considerably related to politics. On the other hand, sociology, which focuses on the peasant's life like Aruga's method, distanced itself from politics. It may be necessary to know this complexity of the different standpoints of the people involved when we consider the research history.

## 3 Conclusion

### 3.1 Standpoints of people involved

In this section, we summarize what we found and other implications. Isigami research was conducted under the circumstances described above, and promotion of the folk crafts movement was attempted based on the *Settyō*. The following is a summary of the standpoints of the people involved.

Aruga (sociology researcher): While approaching the folk crafts movement, he took a distance from Yanagi with a viewpoint to understand life. In order to grasp the common people's lives more deeply, he changed his discipline to sociology. His position was not Marxism, and was more purely academic than about practicality. He did not think that Isigami's *Nago* system was feudal. He understood it as an overall benefit relationship.

Yanagi (folk crafts activist and thinker): The folk crafts movement was centered on artistic areas, and inner beauty was more important than the outside of living (eg. poverty). He accepted cooperation with the government from the standpoint of improving people's living conditions. On the other hand, he had a keen criticism towards government regime on Okinawa's language problem, etc. In that sense, we should agree with the criticism of his unawareness of his own political nature.

Yamaguti (high-ranking officer): Since he was a graduate of the agricultural department, he kept in mind a main goal of the improvement of peasants' lives. Besides that, he was influenced by the folk crafts. He was an unusual officer and organizer.

Perriand (interior designer): The attitude towards the folk crafts items was almost the same as Yanagi. It could be said that she was an indispensable person when considering the contemporary nature and universality of the thought of the folk crafts movement. Also, in intellectual exchanges, her existence had great influence in the long term.

### 3.2 Implications

In this way, after the Syōwa Depression period, it could be said that each of these influential people came into the Tōhoku district, influenced by common tasks of a same era, although there were some differences in each field and area of attention of the individuals.

What we would like to think about is the political nature and practicality of the folk crafts movement and rural sociology at this time. On this point, we have to carefully consider if we can say the following: Aruga's sociology, which came in the course of pursuing the peasant's life and which he is trying to refine as an academic discipline, placed itself at a distance from direct politics. Yanagi's folk crafts movement, as it was a 'movement', could be said to capture 'life' emphasized on the 'aesthetic aspect'. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between political nature and practicality.

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### Notes

- 1) In this paper, we write Japanese names following the Japanese name order, where the family name comes before the given name. Also, the Cabinet-ordered Romanization system (*Kunreisiki Rōmaji*) is used for all Japanese words.
- 2) We abbreviate this institute as the *Settyō* (雪調).
- 3) However, Tutiya and Hayakawa also wrote short reports (Tutiya 1935=1937, Hayakawa 2000).
- 4) Source: gatta! web (<https://www.okaze-gatta.jp/feature/2544>).
- 5) In connection with ethnology, it is also interesting that Perriand was deepening the friendship with ethnologist Matudaira Narimitu, who had been studying in Paris and had learned from Marcel Mauss, in the *Hakusan Maru* ship that Perriand and Matudaira used when traveling to Japan. Matudaira is a good friend of Sibusawa Keizō since elementary school, and by being acquainted with Matudaira, Perriand has also visited *Hanamaturi* festival, which is a subject of Matsudaira's investigation and is famous due to a research monograph written by Hayakawa Kōtarō with the assistance of Sibusawa's Attie Museum ("Charlott Perriand et le Japon" Study Group ed. 2011: 50). On this point we got the suggestion from Ms. Hata Yukiko.
- 6) This fact was rediscovered by Mr. Mizukosi Keizi and others in recent years (Charlotte Perriand et Sinjo exhibition planning committee ed. 2012).
- 7) Perriand had a relationship with the Tatumura Textile Art Institute in Kyōto ("Charlott Perriand et le Japon" Study Group ed. 2011: 101), and Mr. Tatumura Heizō II who majored in the history of aesthetics and art history at the Tōkyo Imperial University. Coincidentally he is from the same laboratory as Aruga, though the periods are different. We would like to consider these relationships in the future. On this point we got the suggestion from Ms. Hata Yukiko.
- 8) On this point we got the suggestion from Mr. Takahasi Yūsuke and related organizations.
- 9) However, Takenaka insisted that rather than criticizing Yanagi in such a way, we should understand his theory as the theory that could exceptionally show political nature in those times (Takenaka 1999: 31). This is because Yanagi did not aggressively support and cooperate with the wartime regime, like other *Sirakaba* intellectuals and literary scholars such as Musyanokōzi Saneatu or Takamura Kōtarō did.

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**和文要旨** 岩手県八幡平市石神は、日本農村社会学の基礎をつくった有賀喜左衛門の代表的調査地である。彼は1935（昭和10）年から石神村を調査し、それにより同族団理論を構築して日本農村社会の基層を解明することになった。この当時、1930（昭和5年）からの昭和農業恐慌の影響では東北農山村の困窮が問題となった。そのとき、柳宗悦ら民藝運動家が積雪地方農村経済調査所（旧山形県新庄町）の依頼のもと、東北各地の工芸品に着目して農村経済更生運動に協力している。柳らは、有賀が調査をおこなっていたのとほぼ同時期に石神をも訪問している。それというものの、この石神がある浅澤地区は江戸時代からの漆器生産で著名な場所でもあったからである。さらに興味深いことは、その指導員として、ル・コルビジエの共同作業員であるデザイナーのシャルロット・ペリアンがフランスから来日し、数年間にわたり東北地方を指導に訪れたことである。こうした当時の研究機関と民藝運動家、デザイナーとの連携活動については、近年日本でも建築家、民俗学者や市民団体によって再発見され、地域おこしへの活用が模索されつつある。本研究は、石神を契機としての民藝運動、デザイナー、農村社会学に関わる人物の交流を素描し、それらの特徴の把握を試みた。